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TUESDAY, MARCH 12, 1912.

SPEAKER BYRD.

Without in anywise detracting from the abilities or performances of the other members of the present General Assembly, it must be said that its most impressive figure has been the Speaker of the House. Since Mr. Byrd became the presiding officer of that body, which was simultaneous with his entrance upon legislative life, he has been ever interesting, aggressive and effective; but during the session just closing he has displayed tact, courage, resourcefulness and qualities of constructive statesmanship that have surprised even those best acquainted with his conspicuous abilities.

It is not necessary for us to approve every position taken in debate, nor every vote cast by him, in order to commend in general the conservatively progressive zeal with which he has striven for the betterment of conditions, financial and political, in the State. Neither is it any reflection upon the merit of his services that some of his most patriotic purposes were thwarted, or that others succeeded only to a contracted degree. It was too much to demand of any legislator that he succeed in all, or even most, of the commendable things he undertakes. Another has said in regard to such matters: "I am not bound to succeed; but I am bound to be true." As we view the record, Speaker Byrd has been true to his high trust, and has enhanced an already enviable reputation.

In particular, his fight for equal taxation—only partially successful in the House and totally unsuccessful in the Senate—has been the way for some definite and remedial action at the next session of the Legislature. His primary bill, even though derailed in the Senate, marks a step in the direction of primary reform. His work for the purgation of registration lists, if it had not come to naught in the upper house, would have materially diminished election frauds. His child labor bill, if it had not likewise perished, would have further extended the benevolent protection of this tender portion of our laboring class.

We trust he may be returned to the distinguished place he has rendered more distinguished, and with energy unabated by discouragement, continue his arduous labors for the promotion of the best interests of Virginia.

NOT ALTOGETHER FANTASTIC.

Plato, the first chronicler thereof, who derived his information from the priests of Egypt, tells us that in the Atlantic over against the Pillars of Hercules, lay an island larger than Asia and Africa combined, and in its vicinity were other islands from which there was a passage to a great continent beyond. This was the Lost, by some termed the "fabulous," Atlantis. But was it fabulous?

That has been a question among naturalists, historians, paleontologists, geologists, dreamers, vulcanologists, et al omne genus, ever since the days of the ancient Greek philosopher and dramatist, and by those who have accepted his statement as based on fact various theories have been evolved. One of the most plausible of these is that the existence of the Lost Atlantis is proved by the architectural similarity of Egyptian and Central and South American ruins, which is disclosed in ornamentation, religious symbols and the like.

This theory, which has many adherents, including eminent archaeologists, taken in connection with a claim of discovery recently made by a French savant, Louis Germain, before the French Academy of Sciences, and his deductions from the discovery, and coupled with a sentence in Sir Ernest Shackleton's article on the still unsolved problems that will lure the adventurer, from which we quoted the other day, brings us back to the "Future of Exploration." M. Germain's claim is that he found in Morocco in the quaternary strata fossil remains of mollusks identical with such as are extant in the Cape Verde archipelago. His deduction is that the Cape Verde group constitutes the fragment of a continent that once extended to the African coast and was submerged in the Pliocene Age. The sentence of Sir Ernest Shackleton is: "Finally, the exploration of the submarine world is only just begun."

The suggestion here is obvious, and who shall say that it is altogether fantastic? It is no more fantastic than the generation ago would have been considered the present development of aviation and submarine voyaging, both of which, judging the future by the past, are still in their infancy and are purely on the brink of their possibilities. Modern travelers have established that the much discredited Marco Polo was not a Munchausen and Lagarrat and weaver of fairy tales. Stanley and his successors in penetrating darkest Africa proved that the

pyram stories of Strabo and Aristotle and other investigators of their time or thenceabouts did not render them eligible to membership in an Ananias Club; and the reputations of various other aformentioned narrators have been rescued from the slough of derisive doubt by the spirit of adventure and exploration and through the facilities latter day science and invention have placed at the command of men to satisfy his insatiable thirst for knowledge and ambition to unlock the last of the world's secrets.

If the Lost Atlantis is not fabled—and, as we have pointed out, there is more than legend to sustain the contention that it is not—what shall say but that, with coming advances in appliances for submarine navigation, it is not destined that during submarine explorations shall vindicate the Egyptian priests and Plato and their disciples in the latter's belief in regard to the island or continent? Who can forecast with safety that it will not be shown that the "preposterous" demonstrations and "ridiculous" conclusions of Ignatius Donnelly and the wild imaginings of Jules Verne were not prophetic of realization? These results would be no less astounding or annihilating to the dogma of impossibility than Marconi's vindication and fulfillment of Puck's girle prophecy.

So it is that on reflection we see that, as we have indicated, Sir Ernest's sentence may be far from being altogether fantastic. It may presage the giving up by the deep of most valuable and interesting secrets, including positive or negative evidence that will settle the controversy over the Lost Atlantis. Of one thing we may be certain: so long as man is what he is, if there is any chance or hope of settling it through submarine exploration, some intrepid spirit will make the attempt. Granting, however, for the sake of argument, that the idea is "somewhat" as opposed to "altogether" fantastic, it is none the less fascinating as opening up a field of speculation as to what, within the range of conceded reasonable possibilities, submarine exploration may reveal.

WHAT WATSON WOTS.

William Watson, the English poet and author of that vigorous bit of venom, "The Woman With the Serpent's Tongue," has let fall a few pearls about the poet's place in England and America. We must say he has more spleen than splendor in his remarks. He says the poet's place in England is neither widely recognized nor very comfortable, and he lays much of the blame at the door of the English monarchy. "King Edward VII. was a man of fine human qualities, but he was not furiously addicted to literature." No one can accuse Poet Watson of not being furiously addicted to it. He is especially famous because only a single man of letters was invited to represent English literature at Edward's coronation. That man was not Mr. Watson, but a novelist not usually reckoned of the first rank. "Tut, tut, Willie! I have not heard of the gentleman who was full of sound and fury, signifying nothing." The poet who minted that line from a divine imagination didn't have to wait on royalty; he was content with the applause of what to-day would be a moving picture audience. And besides an ambassador to the court must bear credentials of unmistakable verity. Mayhap the muses neglected to sign W. W.'s.

Poet Watson also has a fling at the one man in England whose income from his verse would not have seemed contemptible to Byron or Scott. He showed praiseworthy reticence in not naming this bard, but merely described him with the light touch of a burlesque vocabulary as "the vehement and voluble glorifier of British imperialism and aggression." This deep disguise conceals one R. Kipling, who might parody his own lines by saying: "A Watson of the species is more deadly than a male." Finally he harks back to the old charge that the trouble is all with the critics who have given themselves over to the "caprices of a temperamental criticism." They have discovered that "brilliant but unsound criticism is more readable than unbrilliant but sound criticism." Judging from this outburst of envious envy, we imagine Mr. Watson ought to be acquainted with the caprices of a temperamental criticism himself, but it must be qualified as both unbrilliant and unsound. He forgets that a true poet seeks neither the applause of a multitude nor the jeweled decoration of royal fancy. His call comes from within, and his only critic is the cruel conscience of art. No money could pay for the real, divine fire at which the chilly hearts of men can warm themselves, and no reward is possible save the glory of dwelling with beauty and truth and in some way carrying them abroad into life.

SEATTLE SETS THE PACE.

Seattle's recent municipal election certainly set a record for trying out to-date governmental theories. The people went in for every new style in democratic machinery, tangled them up with each other, sorted them out with the assistance of the women at the polls, and the country at large can learn lessons from the results for the next year. One lesson was that the recall is generally going to be tested twice. Last year Seattle recalled "Hill" Gill, the Mayor, because he was permitting the town to be run wide open. He was a candidate for re-election and in the primary, on February 29, received a plurality of more than 10,000 over Cotterill. Yet, on March 5, Cotterill was elected by a margin of less than 1,000. This would seem to indicate that a recalled official is going to seek vindication at the next opportunity in a general election. The gun behind the door will have to be double-barreled if it is going to do final execution. What effect the election of an official who has been recalled would have on municipal conditions it is not easy to say. In Seattle, it would have been viewed as a desire for more freedom in gambling and vice than ever before. But the chance of testing the validity of public sentiment a second time should prove a check upon the hasty and ill-considered action of a temporary popular prejudice.

Another deduction from the results is that under proper guidance the people can choose a man they regard as right, while repudiating a particular doctrine he may hold as wrong. Cotterill, a single-taxer, was elected, though the single-tax amendment failed. He stood was overwhelmingly defeated. The voters wanted a man to carry out their will rather than his own pet theories. The women, who contributed largely to reversing the verdict of the primary, seem to have stood solid on the moral issue of a cleaner town. Seattle will now have an opportunity of testing the validity of the academic objection to female suffrage that it may create an artificial majority in which the police power of force does not reside. If the majority of men prefer an open town, will the moral suasion of the women exercised at the polls be able to enforce the law? The value of the referendum as a means of direct government was also tested. No less than forty-five propositions were submitted to the people's decision in the Seattle election. It is too early to say whether their decisions were logical or wise. One of the propositions was for the establishment of a municipal paper. The necessity for this is obvious if the people are going to attempt to inform themselves upon any great number of complex issues.

Whatever the outcome of this attempt to make advanced legislative methods work, Seattle can find consolation in knowing that she is doing laboratory work for the rest of the country. Her mistakes will teach as much as her successes. Her efforts will be subjected to the keen scrutiny of public thinkers for months to come.

GINGER, GRIT AND GUMPTION.

There still resides virtue in the good, short Anglo-Saxon word that is short because it means one thing, and means it hard, without quibble or equivocation. The famous short and ugly word has the value of being incapable of misinterpretation. If anybody calls you that, you fight, without waiting for a court of last resort to apply the rule of reason. If somebody insinuates that your veracity may border on prevarication, you may write a bale of letters, make a speech, apply for an injunction or light a cigarette. Sense is frequently obscured under the recondite divergences of a tortuous verbiage. Is it not?

This preamble leads us to the point that the words grit, ginger and gumption may not be Anglo-Saxon, and they may not be especially dignified, but they have a definite, clear-cut meaning to every American citizen of twenty-one and would make a pretty good political platform. If those three elements were injected into the people, progressive reform would not be long coming. They have what the pugilist calls a "punch," and they do not belaud things as do the soft, hypnotic syllables of initiative, referendum and preferential presidential primary. Democratic government does not need more machinery; it needs more power. It doesn't need a gun behind the door half so much as it needs a good pair of legs to carry a man to the polls, and an honest opinion to make him vote.

The true initiative is ginger enough to demand good laws; the true recall is grit enough to repudiate a man who does not represent his constituents honestly; the true referendum, gumption enough to decide whether the thing wanted has been done, and if it has not, to send somebody else to do it. Giving things Latin names does not change human nature one single iota. A lazy citizen by any other name is only a lazy citizen. And it is his lack of energy and ignorance keep him away from the polls, then the strong, pushing man, like any other strong kind of creature, is going to nose in and get more than his share. Many a man has been scared half to death by a doctor's prescription in Latin that meant nothing but a tonic of iron and quinine and beef juice. A good many of the present political panaceas when turned into English mean nothing but grit, ginger and gumption. If, in addition to those words for vital issues, there could be found one for political fakery, similar to the quack in medicine and the shyster in the law, it would be easier for the common man to come out of a waste of weary words less befuddled and with a new idea in his head and a fresh courage in his heart.

Some one out in Los Angeles has seen a couple of runspots. Nowadays, Richmond is glad even to spot the sun.

Uncle Simpson Popper says there ought to be a law against a clerk's whispering in your ear, "What else will you have to-day?" It's hypocrisy for ev'ly end. He went in to buy an axe-handle the other day, and came out with a bottle of freckle lotion and the nozzle for a hose. It ain't the cost that's worryin' him, but explainin' when Aunt Susannah sees the bill.

If the laundrymen who are convening in Richmond this week will kindly take some steps to reduce the mortality in shirt buttons from the front of our shirts, we will be grateful.

What this country really needs is a dozen or so of the real old-fashioned pear-shaped gags that the Spanish Inquisition had a fancy for.

On the Spur of the Moment

By Roy K. Moulton

The Easter Hat. This is but a little sonnet on the subject of a bonnet. Of a bonnet in the very latest style. With the new and weird creation. With the joyous exclamation: "Now, I guess that this will hold 'em for a while."

It conceals most every feature of the proud and happy creature. It resembles an inverted butter bowl. And there is no way of knowing if she's coming or she is going. It's the same before and aft, upon my soul.

Six or seven folks could cover from the storm beneath its cover; For an army tent it surely would suffice. It's a large and roomy bonnet, But the worst of all, doggone it, Is that there is nothing small about the price.

Time Table of a Congressman.

The life of a Congressman is not all due to soup and flies of the valley. The people at home may think so, but the people at home are laboring under a delusion. The following was the time table of one of the Congressmen along about the middle of February:

- 7 A. M.—Breakfast.
- 8:15 to 9—Reading letters from constituents who wanted something for nothing.
- 9 to 11:30—Dictating diplomatic replies and regrets.
- 11:30 to 12—Conferences with twenty district political leaders, all of whom have journeyed to Washington to land one job for every twenty different men.
- 12 to 12:30—Attends Congress.
- 12 to 12:30—Lunch in the House restaurant with said district leaders.
- 12:30 to 3—Showing folks from home about the Capitol and trying to make engagements for them to see the President.
- 3 to 5:30—Listening to claims of 147 candidates for the postmaster-ships.
- 5:30 to 6—Trying to send all of the contestants away satisfied.
- 6 to 6:15—Dinner at home.
- 6:15 to 7:30—Arguing with man from home who wants to be consul at the Fiji Islands.
- 7:30 to 12—Listening to punk speeches at a banquet.
- 1 A. M.—Lights out.

Things That Are Sure to Come Back.

- Cats.
- Scandal.
- Bad pennies.
- Magazine stories.
- Sarah Bernhardt.
- Gulons.
- Unpaid lecture on safe table.
- East Lynne.
- Instalment collectors.
- Gas meter readers.
- Handles on frozen pumps.

According to Uncle Abner.

There ain't nothing in this world that looks good to a feller when he has a toothache. Hank Purdy says he has got a notion to move to Nova Scotia or Niz-z-rauger, just so he can get out from under the jurisdiction of the United States Weather Bureau.

A beautiful gal can get along, and so can the fish, but when a fish is neither, there is only one thing for her to do, and that is to learn to cook. Spring have surely come. Old Ez Purdy has started settin' out in the sun in his shirt-sleeves at the south-side of the river. He always sets in the same place until October 1, and also in the same shirt-sleeves. Then he puts on his flannel one for winter.

Voice of the People

The Editor of the Times-Dispatch: To the Editor of the Times-Dispatch: The people of the James River Valley have a grievance against standing a matter affecting their stomachs and their purses, and their opportunity to obtain an occasional day's sport, and now while our game laws are being so carefully overhauled this matter should be looked into also, and the necessary relief be given.

Previous to the building of the James River Canal in the late thirties, all of the streams of the Valley of the James were full of fish, even the small branches afforded a plentiful supply of the kinds that were to be found regularly above tide-water all the season long. In the spring not only the small branches but the larger tributaries, were, during the season, full of shad, and there were regular seining grounds all along the James above Richmond, and also on many of its branches. The Rivanna River in this county having, in its first fifteen miles above its mouth on the James, two or three miles of shad-seining grounds. Between the years 1870 and 1880 I talked with many aged citizens on this subject, and all of them were unanimous in their opinion that the shad was once plentiful, and that the loss of the shad was due to the building of the James River Canal. They also would tell me of the loss of the shad in the river and creeks to be taken with hook and line.

When the old canal was built it had to have water, and to get that water there was a dam built across every tributary of the James, and every dam was a barrier to the shad. The thought of the shad, or even dreamed that there could be any vital connection between the dam and the shad, could easily go down with the water, but could not get back again. Now, it is not generally known, and the habit prevails to what extent nearly all of our native fish do, to a greater or less extent, go down the stream in the fall and come back again in the spring, just as the

ABE MARTIN



By John T. McCutcheon.

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"I bet yer glad to be out again, haint you, Johnny?"

suckers ("fat-backs") go back to the rivers and ponds from the creeks after their breeding season is over.

It seems that they are not in the habit of climbing the streams in the periods of heavy floods, when they could pass over the dams, owing probably to the extreme muddiness of the water. It therefore becomes necessary to build fishways, over the dams, in order that the fish may get over. This is no impractical scheme. These ladders are in use on many rivers, both in North America and in Europe. There was once a noted salmon river in Scotland, in ascending which the salmon were always stopped by a heavy fall, too high for them to jump; a fish-ladder was built around this fall and thereafter the upper half of this river was full of salmon each season. Many of the rivers of the New England States after being dammed were found to gradually become almost barren of fish, while the shad disappeared completely as it has in the waters above Richmond.

Under the old contract it devolved upon the owners of the franchise—I. e., the canal company and afterward the railroad company—to maintain the dam on all its dams. Later on a deal was made, whereby the railroad was to take out all the dams not in use and to build a certain bridge as the duty of keeping ladders on the dam time if a single effort to build or keep a ladder has ever been made I have never heard of it.

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residents that we must keep in mind also—bass, chub, silver perch, pike, bream (a rosy-headed, gamey fish called white chub), suckers of at least three kinds, catfish and other less valuable kinds. All are present in small numbers, but would be plentiful if they had the free run of the river. And to these I am quite certain several more would be added if ladders were built, as then we could ask the United States Fish Commission to stock the rivers.

I have recently had some correspondence with the Fish Commission, and from a recent letter relative to the scarcity of fish in the James I quote as follows: "The trouble with the James is a number of causes, excessive fishing, pollution of the waters and inadequate protective laws being the most important factors."

"There is more or less of a migratory movement among all river fishes, and the erection of fishways in dams forming an obstruction to the free passage of fish is strongly advocated. The construction and maintenance of such fishways, however, is a matter which is within the jurisdiction of the States concerned, the Federal government having no authority in such matters."

If any one were to suggest that the Federal government should take charge of this and force the State to attend to this matter it would be cried down as being an invasion of State's rights; yet the people who are most concerned in the question pay no attention at all to it. While if the subject of ladders be mentioned to the owners of dams they at once exhibit symptoms of hysteria, saying that the cost would

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